Police Training and Education: missed opportunities; future possibilities

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Summary

This chapter reflects upon the relationship between the higher education sector and police services in England and Wales over recent years and considers ways in which the emergence of the College of Policing presents new opportunities for furthering the academic status of the learning that occurs within police training contexts. The chapter draws upon the lessons gained from Canterbury Christ Church University's (CCCU) direct experiences of working with the police over the past 17 years in designing, developing and delivering bespoke academic programmes for serving police officers, initial police recruits and prospective police officers. Our starting point is an assumption that higher education (HE) has a positive role to play in helping to develop police training and we concentrate our attention on trying to explain why there is resistance to establishing academic levels of attainment for the learning that takes place within police training and education contexts. We present a number of recommendations regarding ways in which the College of Policing can help overcome such resistance in its efforts to professionalise and modernise policing. Importantly, we recognise the need for a period of transition; there are arguments to be won within all levels of policing and especially with the large number of officers who are, in our view, too often excluded from debates about the role HE can play within policing. We refer to this group of officers as the 'excluded middle', as will be explained below. We have adopted a ten year approach, akin to the approach taken within the Patten Report (1999), to allow for a gradual, but meaningful change in the way the police services in England and Wales view knowledge and its role within contemporary policing.

The ethos underpinning Canterbury Christ Church University's work with the police

The Canterbury Christ Church University experience offers, we believe, a useful starting point for addressing the questions outlined above. We do not claim exclusive rights or a monopoly on higher education insight into policing here. Indeed we recognise that there were already important developments happening during the early 1990s in the development of academic policing programmes. Portsmouth University, for example, had introduced a part-time distance learning programme for serving police officers and the Scarman Centre at Leicester University offered police related postgraduate programmes. In more recent times there have been many innovative policing programmes developed by HEIs.

The development of the policing programmes at CCCU began from recognising that much learning takes place within policing but this learning is rarely formally captured or acknowledged, particularly outside of the police organisation. This insight was gained from observing police trainers studying on a 'Cert Ed' programme undertaken at police training centres throughout the UK. Trainers from over 20 police services studied on such programmes at the University in the early 1990s and this led to the establishment of a small team at the University to consider the potential for awarding academic credit for the learning taking place in police training centres.

The focus on recognition is crucial in understanding the ethos adopted at CCCU in developing its relationships with the police. We took the decision early that we would develop a programme in collaboration with the police by looking at what they did, what they knew and then to subject policing assumptions to academic scrutiny. We did not intend to offer police officers a programme 'off the shelf' in criminology or law or a combination of the two. We wanted, rather ambitiously, to develop an academic understanding of what police officers did and what they needed to know in order to do their jobs better.

Approaching the matter in this way inverts how we see the relationship between having the appropriate attributes to be a good police officer and the necessity of having an academic qualification in order to be a good police officer. Those who see attaining an academic qualification prior to joining the police as an artificial and unnecessary barrier, assume that the academic qualification has no significant bearing on whether a person is likely to be a good police officer. It sees the attainment of an academic qualification as a barrier to entry that does little to develop within a person the appropriate attributes required of a police officer. Clearly, if this assumption was correct, then we would have some sympathy with this argument.

However, our approach has always been to start with the question of what a police officer needs to know and how they can best demonstrate that they know what they are supposed to know. We can put aside the question of an academic qualification at this point as a secondary matter. The primary concern is ensuring that our police officers know what they need to know and have the attributes that make for good policing.

Importantly, looking at the question in this way, we begin to see that academic qualities are required for a person to be able to demonstrate that they have the appropriate knowledge and attributes to be a police officer. The question of a qualification follows as a matter of justice and fairness; if people are demonstrating academic qualities then they should be rewarded appropriately.

The development of bespoke policing programmes at CCCU focused on what a higher education perspective could contribute to what already existed. An initial concern for us was the level and quality of assessment within police training centres. Those responsible for curriculum development within police training, from National Police Training (NPT), to Centrex and most recently the National Police Improvement Agency (NPIA), have been thorough in setting what needs to be learnt on police training programmes. However, our experience has been that the same degree of attention has not been paid to how officers on training programmes are actually assessed. It is one thing to establish what a police officer needs to know, quite something else to establish whether they do actually know what they are supposed to know. The focus on assessment is important because it establishes how an officer articulates what they understand. The conclusion we drew early in our encounters with police training was this: in demonstrating that individuals knew all of the things that they were supposed to know, for example in relation to initial police training, police officers would need to be demonstrating academic qualities.

The most intense engagement we experienced with the police was over a four year period, 2004-2008, during which time all new entrants into Kent Police spent their first year at the University and were registered on a Certificate of Higher Education in Policing. The student officers, as we referred to them, needed to pass this Certificate in order to complete their initial training. The University's

collaboration was one of five pilot schemes sanctioned by the Home Office in the period between announcing that the Centrex regional training centres would be closing down, requiring each force to review how it carried out the initial training of its officers, and the actual closure of the regional training centres in 2006. Other police service also chose at a later point to work with an HEI in a similar vein and by the end of the 2000s there were a number of initial police training programmes being delivered in universities. These programmes have not been without their problems (Heslop 2010; 2011; Macvean & Cox 2012; Wood & Tong 2009). In many respects, they did little more than simply transfer the location of the delivery of police training from a traditional police training centre to a university campus. The demands of the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP) and the degree to which it prescribed very tight parameters regarding what was to be taught and how it was to be taught, left little room for imaginative and creative contributions towards the learning experiences of the student officers. These programmes have not been allowed the scope, in our view, to make real advances in how we assess a student officer's learning, and in particular, regarding the relationship between knowledge acquisition and knowledge application. Nonetheless, the significance of these programmes, even if simply understood as a change in venue, should not be underestimated. If nothing else, they have polarised the debate about HE involvement in police training and in doing so, they have made the arguments for and against HE involvement clearer and more public.

In our view, the polarisation can be reduced to a question of control. For example, who controls the curriculum for initial police training and education? Is it the NPIA, the individual police service, the university or a combination of two or more of these players? Are the individuals on the programme students or police officers, or some kind of hybrid student officer? This issue of control runs throughout all of the issues raised in the debate about the merit of HE involvement in modernising policing, albeit in different ways.

In addressing the question of control, it is important at the outset to note that in arguing that academic qualities (and therefore academic qualifications) are increasingly a necessity for officers within contemporary policing, we are not saying that they are in themselves a sufficient condition for establishing the policing credentials of an individual. We recognise that policing is a highly practical and applied occupation that requires skills that are not exclusively academic. These other components of what makes someone a good police officer are of equal importance and recognising the academic qualities of serving police officers is not the same as suggesting police officers need to become more academic. The approach we have adopted at CCCU has always been to emphasise that our programmes are designed primarily to enhance policing, not to produce policing academics.

We believe that academia has a unique role to play within developing policing and that is in providing the police service a degree of intellectual space. It is precisely because we recognise the extent to which policing is an applied and practical occupation that there needs to be opportunities for policing issues to be considered, researched, questioned, challenged and critiqued outside of the normal environments in which policing occurs. Academia is the place reserved within liberal democratic societies for reflection and critical thought. The image of the university as an ivory tower is outdated and for the most part universities are places that have opened their doors to wide sections of society and have become much more willing to engage with the real world and real problems. Nonetheless, it remains the case that higher education retains as one of its unique selling points a privileged position within society as a place in which knowledge is valued as a good in and of itself. Academia offers

police services and police officers the intellectual space to consider policing matters away from the pressures of having to apply solutions to people's problems with little time for reflection. Academic policing programmes can become, in this respect laboratories in which police practices can be subjected to academic scrutiny.

Developments in the relationships between the HE sector and police services in England and Wales, and Northern Ireland

Over the 17 year time frame we have worked with the police there have been considerable advancements in the relationships between police services and universities across the United Kingdom and a significant development of academic provision for police across the higher education sector. The developments in Scotland are fairly unique and beyond the scope of this chapter. Our focus is on the developments in England and Wales and Northern Ireland. The developments have been wide ranging, from further education colleges offering higher education training programmes for police in collaboration with universities and/or police services, to the involvement of Russell Group universities in developing police research and/or delivering programmes for the most senior of police officers (see Bryant, Bryant, Tong and Wood, 2012). Nonetheless, despite these substantial strides, it remains the case at present that the selection process for joining the police continues to take no formal account of the educational achievements of an applicant. Winsor's (2012) recommendation that there should be an academic requirement of at least Level 3 ('A' level or equivalent) for joining the police (in addition to the existing requirements), is being acted upon but applicants will still not require HE level qualifications to perform police duties at any level, in any role or at any rank (Neyroud, 2011). We believe this is problematic; that those carrying out the vast majority of policing roles at all levels need to be able to demonstrate that they have the appropriate knowledge and skills and, in doing so, require attributes associated with learning at HE level 4 and above. Our first recommendation is:

> **R1 The level of knowledge required within all policing roles should be recognised as academic level 4 and above**

There still remains resistance to this idea despite the extent to which shortfalls in the quality of police performance has been addressed as an issue in many quarters over the recent period. For example, in relation to what police constables need to know, there have been continued calls for improvements in police training over the past 30 years (Scarman, 1981; Byford, 1981; Foster, 1999; HMIC, 1999; Macpherson, 1999; BBC 2003; HMIC, 2002). Some of these calls have been sparked by examples of bad policing, such as Scarman (1981), Macpherson (1999) and BBC (2003) whilst other drivers have been more concerned with the reform and modernisation of policing (Audit Commission 1993; Sheehy 1993; Police Reform Act 2002; HMIC 2002). In recent years there have been examples of both drivers. For example, the death of Ian Tomlinson at the G20 demonstrations and the role of the police in the cover up over the death of 96 Liverpool supporters at Hillsborough Football Stadium in 1989 have called into question people's trust in policing. Likewise, there appears to be growing support within the police reform and modernisation debates that a more formal recognition of the role universities can play in enhancing the professionalism of the police service will help to reduce incidents of bad policing and re-establish the status of policing in people's minds. For example, following on from Flanagan (2008) and Stone (2009), both Neyroud (2011) and Winsor (2011; 2012) have considered alternative means of selection, recruitment and training, and in doing so have raised questions about what the appropriate academic level for those entering into a policing career should

be. It appears that these drivers are finally being acted upon, as evidenced by the establishment of a College of Policing to come into effect on 1st December 2012. The College will be a company operating independently of government, to be replaced at a later stage by a statutory professional body for policing (established through legislation). The College of Policing will, in the words of Theresa May the Home Secretary, play a 'major role in shaping the work of the higher education sector to improve the broader body of evidence on which policing professionals rely' (Home Office, 2012).

There also appears to be support from a number of leading chief officers for further engagement with HEIs. At CCCU we were fortunate to enjoy a very productive relationship with Kent Police under the leadership of Sir David Phillips for a number of years. Sir David has been a keen advocate of the idea that policing should be underpinned by a body of knowledge akin to other areas of professional life. Other chief officers from Kent Police and other police services have lent their support in advancing academic policing programmes at CCCU and there are a growing number of positive relationships around the UK between police services and HEIs.

For example, the Higher Education Forum for Learning and Development in Policing, which emerged between September 2008 and March 2009, represents over 20 UK based universities currently working with the police. The Forum has attracted leading police chief officers as keynote speakers at its annual conferences, who have consistently spoken positively about the role higher education can play within policing. Most recently, Sir Peter Fahy, Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) lead on Workforce Development, addressed the Forum at its conference in September 2012 held at Liverpool John Moores University.

Perhaps most telling in this respect is the growing number of chief officers who are supporting programmes with HEIs that offer learning at HE level 4 and above for their new recruits despite the fact that the official requirement as endorsed by the Home Office is for a level 3 certificate. So, although previous assessments favouring more HE involvement in policing have been largely ignored at a formal level, informally many police services are demonstrating that they expect more of their officers. Whilst there have been missed opportunities over the past 30 years, we believe that the College of Policing, with the support of police leaders, is well placed to establish the attainment of at least HE level 4 learning as a norm across all policing roles.

Towards an inevitable role for universities in police learning?

Establishing level 4 attainments as a condition for employment within policing would require a formal role for the HE sector within police training and education. One urgent matter that needs addressing in relation to the initial recruitment of police officers is that there is virtually no distinction between the point of entry of an individual into the police and the point at which that person is attested and given full police powers. Whilst this varies slightly by police service the norm is for entrants into the police is to be given full powers in week 1 of their employment long before they have completed any training.

The distinction made within other professions, between pre-registration and post-registration offers a useful way of addressing this problem. Our second recommendation is:

R2. Higher education becomes responsible for pre-registration education and training (under licence from the College of Policing) and that police forces should be responsible for sign off for full registration as a police officer following employment

This recommendation would allow for people to join a process of becoming a police officer without having a level 4 qualification. However, they would be required to attain the minimum of a level 4 qualification prior to being employed by a police service. Once employed, individual s would need to satisfy the police service's expectations and would only be confirmed as a registered police officer following a probationary employment period with the police service. This period should be shorter than the current 2 year probationary period and more in line with modern employment practice. More significantly, it should have only a minimal training requirement, e.g. equivalent to that required of a transferee from another police service. The probationary period would act as an induction period for the new employee and act as an opportunity for the employer to be satisfied that they have made the right appointment. A three way bidding and commissioning process involving the Home Office, regional consortia of police forces and further and higher education institutions could be overseen by the College of Policing to avoid over supply of pre-registration places. However, this might not be necessary as we believe there is potential for policing degrees to offer students very tangible employment skills in other areas of the economy. Policing and security developments beyond the police service are developing all the time and many of the qualities that police officers can demonstrate are attractive in other walks of life too.

We noted above that there is concern that the requirement of an academic qualification could create an unnecessary barrier for those wishing to join the police. This argument is often developed in a particular way that emphasises the potential impact upon the diversity of officers recruited into the police. We are not convinced by this perspective. Firstly, the police have been far less successful than the higher education sector in attracting people from diverse ethnic backgrounds and problems have been identified regarding the cultural biases of the psychometric tests used by police as part of the police application process. Our colleagues at Wolverhampton University have experienced this problem on their pre-service policing degree. They have found that the level of diversity of the students on their programme drops at the point students need to register a special constable in order to progress on the degree programme. It is at this point that students from different ethnic backgrounds encounter difficulties and are required to withdraw from the programme. In other words, it is not attaining a university degree that prohibits some individuals from joining the police but processes used by the police to select suitable candidates.

There is also evidence to suggest that parents from some ethnic backgrounds discourage their children from joining the police because it is seen to lack professional credentials (when compared to say, law or medicine). A reasonable assumption is that moving to a norm in which academic qualifications are required would enhance the professional status of policing and make it more likely for parents from these ethnic backgrounds to welcome their children's choice to pursue a career in policing.

Beyond ethnicity, it is also argued that the diversity of the police would suffer in other ways, especially regarding age and class. It is suggested that going to university to study policing is far more attractive to young, single, middle class, educated individuals, than it is to those in their late 20s and 30s, who perhaps have a family, mortgage commitments, and/or come from a more traditional working class background, within which educational opportunities would have been limited. The

Police Federation (2011) has used this line of reasoning in its response to recommendations made within Neyroud (2011) suggesting level 4 academic attainment as an entry requirement into policing. The Police Federation (2011) argues against Neyroud (2011) by pointing out that 72% of existing police officers do not have a level 4 or above academic certificate and would therefore have been excluded from joining the police.

This line of reasoning is imbued with a perception of the university as a place beyond the reach of ordinary people. But as we have argued above, this view of the university as an ivory tower is outdated. Although there has been negative press about the extent to which some universities have widened participation, the higher education sector has been transformed over the past 20-30 years as the percentage of school leavers entering tertiary education has continued to rise. People from traditional working class backgrounds, whose parents did not go to university, are increasingly going into higher education. Indeed, even with the significant rise in tuition costs for 2012-13 research suggests that those from the poorest backgrounds appear to be the group least put off by the government's radical changes in how universities are funded. Similarly, higher education is becoming increasingly flexible in how programmes are delivered, and through the use of blended learning, are much more able to facilitate part-time students. This allows those with families and/or an existing career to attend university with a view to a career change over time.

Perhaps most significantly, we have to recognise that the police have not been particularly good at widening the diversity of their respective work forces. In particular, one issue that requires urgent attention is the extent to which police services exclude people deemed to be incapable of contributing towards the policing of society because of physical disabilities.

It should also be noted that we have gained experience across a number of initial police training programmes delivered in universities that have clearly demonstrated that those wishing to join the police are capable of demonstrating the appropriate level of academic ability to achieve a level 4 qualification. At CCCU we had over 600 officers successfully complete a level 4 Certificate of Higher Education in Policing over a four year period. Many of those completing this programme had no idea that they would be required to do so until the point of actually joining the police. Concerns about good police officers failing to meet the academic requirements were unfounded. There was only one officer from the 600 who successfully completed the programme who came close to failing academically despite gaining rave reviews from the tutor constables on area. Of the small number of officers who seriously struggled on the academic side of the programme, they were invariably also struggling out on area; some were even subject to disciplinary sanctions. The achievement of the academic qualification at level 4 was clearly dependent upon officers taking themselves and their learning seriously.

Nonetheless, we feel that it is appropriate to move towards the above model becoming the norm over a ten year period. Our third recommendation is that 50% of those recruited into the police over the next period should be through this route, with immediate effect by making use of existing pre-service policing degree programmes currently offered in HEIs. The remaining 50% could be recruited from within PSCO and Special Constable ranks. However, the ratio should gradually shift over a 10 year period towards becoming 100% of all recruits requiring a level 4 qualification before being employed in a professional policing capacity.

R3. Police services should commit now to recruiting at least 50% of new recruits from pre-registration policing programmes set at level 4 and above, with the achievement of qualifications in policing at level 4 and above becoming the normal, routine expectation for all new entrants into the police within a ten year period

It should be noted that there is a buoyant market for pre-service policing programmes. There is not a shortage of those wanting to be police officers who are willing to commit their own time and money to studying on an academic programme at a university prior to joining the police. There has been a substantial increase in the number of pre-service policing programmes despite the recent hiatus in police recruitment, and despite the fact that these qualifications are not formally recognised within police services or the police recruitment procedures. Early signs are that these numbers remain strong despite the move to higher fees within universities from 2012-13.

It also needs to be noted that those already employed within police services recognise that the attainment of policing knowledge at an academic level is a normal and reasonable expectation for anyone wishing to be a police officer. We have witnessed a dramatic increase in the number of serving police officers applying to undertake the in-service Policing degree that we offer at CCCU. A part-time BSc (Hons) Policing programme has run for the past 15 years and for the majority of that time student cohorts have been relatively small, with 10-15 students annually completing the degree programme. In 2010 we saw the number of entrants increase to over 30 and in 2011 this figure more than doubled. The intake for 2012 is above 80 officers. The numbers of serving officers choosing to study on a policing degree at the university is growing significantly despite the fact that the fees have risen by over 40% in 2012. Likewise, the majority of students are expected to pay the fees themselves as police services have cut back on the funding available for officers' staff development. It is important to recognise the need to engage more with existing police officers to make sure that they do not feel excluded in the debates about police professionalization and modernisation, and that they have the opportunities to have their knowledge and skills recognised and advanced through engagement with HE. This is our fourth recommendation:

R4. Access to equivalent in-service policing programmes should be supported to ensure that serving police officers without the requisite qualifications are not disadvantaged

There may be an abstraction cost involved here for police services to accommodate but this should be met easily from the savings made from not having extensive responsibilities towards initial police training.

Overcoming the resistance to HE involvement: targeting the excluded middle

Recommendation 4 is essential in our view to overcoming resistance to a more thorough, systematic and formal recognition of the role universities can play in enhancing police professionalism. More specifically, it helps address the question of why there remains an apparent reluctance to adopt higher education level status as a normal requirement for policing roles, in line with other occupations.
In addressing this resistance and reluctance, we seek to establish both the importance of knowledge within policing and also what is required in order to foster a policing culture within which knowledge

is more widely valued. In order to achieve these aims we need to challenge the most persistent misconceptions regarding higher education.

In particular, we will focus our attention on what we refer to as the 'excluded middle'. By this term we are referring to the majority of existing police officers who did not have the opportunity to engage on an academic programme of study prior to joining the police or during their initial recruitment into the police. This excluded middle has likewise not had the privilege of studying at a university on programmes reserved for senior police leaders. It seems to us that this excluded middle represents a group of people who feel, with some justification, that they have been forgotten and ignored within the debates about the relationships between universities and police services, and the developments that have taken place between these institutions.

The importance of this excluded middle with regards to modernising policing should not be underestimated. As Crank (1998) notes, policing is a multifaceted series of actions that represents an on-going tension between occupationally derived and sustained values, and worldviews that often fail to reflect the stated values of police managers. The tension between top-down bureaucratic pressures and bottom-up persistent and culturally driven values, which results in what are often antagonistic outlooks between rank and file officers and their senior officers, is well documented (Crank 1998; Fitzgerald et al 2002). There are simply too many opportunities for the excluded middle to influence matters in ways other than those desired by reformers and police leaders. This has been demonstrated in relation to the re-schooling that occurs to initial recruits once they are released from the training centre and undertaking patrol (Chan 2003).

Indeed, the ability of police leaders "to bring about sustained organizational change" (Silvestri 2007, p.39) is restricted by the degree to which rank and file officers are empowered with discretion. What constitutes an appropriate police intervention or a successful outcome remains contingent on the perspective of the officer *in situ* at the micro-level, despite significant policy endeavours to impose greater conformity upon police responses. Perhaps even more disconcerting is the extent to which police officers appear to be increasingly reluctant to use discretion because of fear of sanction and to the detriment of policing. As both Flanagan (2008) and Heaton (2010) note, the operational culture of policing appears to becoming increasingly risk averse, with the effect of reducing an officer's confidence to utilise discretion or professional judgement. The result of this is a growing reluctance of people in public office to take responsibility for matters and to pass the decision up the chain of command.

Whether officers are using discretion too much or too little, what is clear is the fact that the actual responses of police officers, many of whom will fit our definition of the excluded middle, is crucial with regards to the success or failure of policy initiatives emanating from the Home Office and police leaders. The influence of the excluded middle in debates about police modernisation is far too significant to be ignored.

Towards the academic recognition of all policing roles

One unhelpful perception that needs to be challenged is that 'anyone' can do policing. At the Higher Education Forum for Learning and Development for Policing's inaugural annual conference in 2010 at UCLAN, it was suggested by a leading ACPO representative that if a 38 year old plumber wished

to join the police we should make it as easy as possible for him or her to do so. This view was countered from the floor with the following question, "what happens when a 38 year old police officer wants to become a plumber?" The answer is that they would need to pass examinations before they would be allowed to pursue their preferred career change. If they could not afford to leave their police job until they could secure a job as a plumber then they would need to study in further education in their spare time. Policing appears to be one of the few jobs willing to employ someone without any formal qualifications and pay them close to a full wage whilst they undertake basic training.

The diversity of the police service is important if it is to be representative of the people it serves. But policing also needs to be aspirational in attracting the best people from a diverse range of backgrounds. It is demeaning to existing police officers to suggest that anyone can do what they do, know what they know, with very little effort. A residual problem in policing is that the absence of professional standards means that bad policing can coexist alongside good policing. Where this happens, it is the bad policing that attracts the media attention and informs public perceptions of the police.

There have been welcome moves within the police service towards developing appropriate professional standards and this process is on-going. It will undoubtedly be a core aspect of the College of Policing's functions. The more these professional standards and expectations are introduced and assessed routinely as part of an officer's professional development, the more we need to find ways of recognising the attainment of these standards. We believe that higher education has an important contribution to make in developing specialist knowledge across all aspects of police work. Indeed our 5th recommendation is:

> **R5. The learning requirements for all policing roles need to be articulated in a manner that provides opportunities for potential recruits and serving police officers alike to undertake generic and specific policing modules, in lesser or greater depth at different academic and professional levels as appropriate**

The process of establishing appropriate professional standards for all police roles leads to a transformation in policing, away from a preoccupation on rank, towards a much more explicit focus on the roles performed by officers. This represents a shift away from *de facto* authority, towards *epistemic* authority and the more this happens, the more there is a role to be played by universities in helping the police to develop appropriate levels of knowledge required at various levels of policing and within a variety of policing specialisms. This also reinforces the idea that an individual can attain the required knowledge for a particular policing role, or for generic policing functions, prior to being employed by the police. There are opportunities here on pre-registration programmes for students to begin developing a specialist area of policing from the outset.

The shift towards epistemic authority causes some concern within policing. Firstly, there is concern about the spectre of direct entry into supervisory rank positions. We are sympathetic to the view that there is merit in having senior officers who have at some point experienced first-hand what the majority of police officers will be experiencing everyday of their respective policing careers. But the point can be exaggerated and many PCs will say anecdotally that their chief officers have very little idea of what things are like today at the cutting edge. In this respect, the fact that senior officers have had street policing experiences might even be a disadvantage given that it was probably a number of

years previously when the kind of policing problems routinely encountered would have been different. In other words, the senior officer who thinks they know what it is like on the streets is more dangerous than someone with no such pretentions.

This leads to the second argument against the idea that police knowledge can be attained prior to joining the police and that is the issue of currency. The argument here suggests that a problem with someone doing a two or three year degree course in policing would find that what they studied in year one of their programme was out of date by the time they were graduating and seeking employment with the police. There are two obvious problems in our view with this line of reasoning. Firstly, it exaggerates the extent to which currency is an important feature currently within policing. It assumes that all police officers today are up to date with the latest changes and developments in legislation, force policies etc. The reality is more likely that those closest to completing their initial training are probably the most up to date officers with regards to generic changes affecting policing broadly. The majority of police work is much more approximate than the currency argument suggests, but even where it is important, the same issues arise whether someone has completed a three year degree programme or their initial police training three years ago. The same issue of how we ensure officers keep up to date remains. If anything, the person who has studied on a degree programme is more likely to be sensitive to the importance of knowledge in the undertaking of their policing duties and more aware of the extent to which legislation and policies are subject to changes that need to be monitored regularly. They are, in short, more likely to be conscious of the need for professionals to regularly update their professional knowledge.

A final point to consider here is that the extent to which the involvement of higher education in helping to establish the learning requirements for all police roles, and routinely assessing officers to ensure they have the appropriate knowledge and skills, enhances the professional status of policing. As the comments allegedly made by Andrew Mitchell in the 'Plebgate' incident indicate, there are those in high office who retain a negative perception of policing. The police have been subjected to much criticism over the past few years, particularly post- Macpherson. Whilst some of this criticism might be valid, our experiences of working with the police over the past 17 years has also impressed upon us the amount of good policing that takes place. Higher education can help the police address its shortcomings and also offer support when it is unjustly criticised.

Importantly, linking to HE allows the police to develop its own professional voice. This has to be a central component of the College of Policing. As Sherman (2012) has argued in a recent newspaper article, the introduction of the Police and Crime Commissioners demands a counterbalancing and constraining influence, to ensure the liberal democratic context within which policing occurs in the UK is not undermined. It is vital that this opportunity is not overlooked in the transition from the interim College of Policing to a fully fledged professional body for policing. The police service needs to take itself seriously before others will take it seriously. This will not be an easy transition given the extent to which well established and long standing professions have fallen under increasing government control in recent years. This is not a particularly congenial time to be introducing a new professional body and the police should make the most of the critical friends they have within universities. Our sixth and final recommendation is:

R.6 Appropriate mechanisms should be established to allow for a flow of academic and professional expertise between HEIs and police services

The College of Policing should have as part of its remit a role to foster greater links between HEIs and police services by facilitating secondments that would bring serving officers into universities and academics into police services for fixed periods of time. It is vital for this to happen that HE is represented within the College of Policing, and this appears to be recognised. The voice of HE needs to be both in terms of (i) research and (ii) learning and teaching.

Concluding remarks

Developments over recent years, we believe, suggest an inevitable move towards greater involvement of the higher education sector in helping the police modernise. They touch upon wider questions of professionalization, leadership, promotion and specialisation that have a clear bearing on the question of an applicant's level of academic attainment, issues that are being discussed much more openly and explicitly following Winsor (2011, 2012). Indeed, there is an opportunity here to review all aspects of learning and development within policing across roles and ranks, and across public and private policing arrangements, across policing functions that require warranted officers and those that do not, from academic perspectives. This would allow for appropriate academic programmes to be developed for all policing roles and ensure that those officers demonstrating that they have the appropriate levels of knowledge and skills are recognised accordingly and awarded academic credits.

However, we use the word 'inevitable' cautiously. We are not foolish enough to assume that there is anywhere near universal acceptance of this inevitability. Indeed, whilst we believe strongly that policing has to be recognised as an occupation that requires qualities associated with higher education learning, we recognise at the same time that there is strong and stubborn resistance to the current professionalisation of policing agenda, especially regarding the role to be played by universities (Police Federation 2011). Nonetheless, we believe,

i) All police roles can be enhanced through the development of an empirical research base and the fostering of a normative appreciation of the purpose of police activities;
ii) The development of an empirical and normative knowledge base for policing allows for, and indeed demands, the requirement for all police officers, including the excluded middle, to be inducted into this body of knowledge, for professional progression of all officers to be linked to an increasing mastering of this knowledge, and for all officers to be regularly updated on advancements in policing knowledge;
iii) The development of this body of knowledge also allows for individuals to begin engaging with what a police officer needs to know before joining the police.

The College of Policing offers an opportunity for these conclusions to be acted upon. There is an opportunity for the status of policing, and police officers, to be raised and for police work to be enhanced through an engagement with HE. There needs to be a creative engagement between police and HE to ensure programmes for all policing roles address both the underpinning knowledge for each area of police work, but also ways in which the practical application of policing skills can be assessed and captured in meaningful ways. Neither the police, nor HE can achieve this on their own.

The College of Policing has to be aspirational but we also recognise the need to be realistic. In order to really transform the way knowledge is perceived within policing there needs to be a thorough

engagement with the vast majority of police officers and we recognise this might take time. Police services and serving police officers alike need to be given time to respond to the dramatic changes occurring within policing. We believe working to a 10 year plan would allow this happen in a fair and appropriate fashion. Most importantly though, we need to ensure that the opportunities emerging from the introduction of the College of Policing have led to real, tangible changes in the status and quality of police training by the 1st January 2023.

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Recommendations:

1) The level of knowledge required within all policing roles should be recognised as academic level 4 and above;
2) Higher education becomes responsible for pre-registration education and training (under licence from the College of Policing) and that police forces should be responsible for sign off for full registration as police officer following employment
3) Police services should commit now to recruiting at least 50% of new recruits from pre-registration policing programmes set at level 4 and above, with the achievement of qualifications in policing at level 4 and above becoming the normal, routine expectation for all new entrants into the police within a ten year period;
4) Access to equivalent in-service policing programmes should be supported to ensure that serving police officers without the requisite qualifications are not disadvantaged;
5) The learning requirements for all policing roles need to be articulated in a manner that provides opportunities for potential recruits and serving police officers alike to undertake generic and specific policing modules, in lesser or greater depth at different academic and professional levels as appropriate;
6) Appropriate mechanisms should be established to allow for a flow of academic and professional expertise between HEIs and police services.